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ABSTRACT

The Elementary School Curriculum Efficacy Program (ESCEP) of the Detroit (Michigan) Public Schools is intended to improve the academic performance of students through the development of positive attitudes toward learning. The ESCEP introduces students to a process of self-exploration that better enables them to understand their personal motivations, take moderate risks, envision a better future, set goals, handle conflict, and work cooperatively. The ESCEP curriculum is divided into 12 modules of instruction that are incorporated into the third grade language arts curriculum. The evaluation in 1991-92 compared the achievement of 252 randomly selected program participants (third-grade students) with that of 213 control students randomly selected from 10 non-participating schools. No significant differences were found for attendance, but grade point averages and California Achievement Test scores were significantly higher for the experimental group. Project staff rated the program favorably, and students in the experimental group had higher posttest scores (compared to their own pretests) on a school attitude measure. Nine recommendations are made based on study findings and observations. (SLD)

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SUMMARY REPORT OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM EFFICACY PROGRAM

1991-92

1993 AERA DIVISION H AWARD WINNING REPORT

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Detroit Public Schools

August, 1992

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM EFFICACY PROGRAM
1991-92

Purpose and Features of the Program

The program is intended to improve the academic performances of students through the development of positive attitudes toward learning. The following two paragraphs present Efficacy as described in the program's literature. Efficacy introduces students to a process of self-exploration which enables them to better understand their personal motivations, learn how to take moderate risks, envision of ideal future for themselves, avoid negative influences and obstacles, set realistic goals, effectively handle conflict situations, and work cooperatively with others to promote mutual support networks. The Efficacy curriculum is divided into twelve (12) modules of instruction. Each one provides daily and sequential instruction throughout the module. The student's workbook is designed to provide what the program refers to as daily interactive support. The instruction takes into consideration the development of oral and written language skills and is incorporated into the third grade language arts curriculum.

The purpose of the evaluation is to access the degree of student success after the program. Results are to be used by central, area and school staff members for purposes of program planning.

Methodology

The evaluation of the Elementary School Curriculum Efficacy Program was designed to answer the two major research questions that follow:

1. How did students in the Elementary School Curriculum Efficacy Program perform with respect to grade point averages, attendance, the California Achievement Tests Form E, Level 13 and the School Attitude Measure, Form 3, Level E/F when compared to a control group?

2. What are staff perceptions of the Elementary School Curriculum Efficacy Program and the in-service training?

To answer the first question, a control group of 213 third grade students was randomly selected from ten non-participating elementary schools. These students' pre and post grade point averages and attendance were compared with corresponding data for 252 third grade students randomly selected from ten elementary schools in the Elementary School Curriculum Efficacy Program. Also data from the California Achievement Tests (CTB/McGraw-Hill, 1986, Form E, Level 13) and the School Attitude Measure (American Testronics, 1989, Form #, Level E/F) were examined.

The second research question was answered through the use of two instruments containing items related to the perceptions held by the staff involved in the Elementary School Curriculum Efficacy Program. The instruments were sent through the school pick-up and were returned to the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Testing. The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Testing staff were responsible for collecting and analyzing all final data and for writing the final report.

Grade point averages and attendance were collected from the June, 1991 and June, 1992 report card markings for both the experimental and control group students. In addition, California Achievement Tests (CAT) data were collected for the experimental and control groups. Pre-data means were subjected to a t-test to determine statistical significance. When pre-data were found to be comparable, a t-test was performed on post data. However, when pre-data were found not to be comparable, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used. School Attitude Measure (SAM) data were collected only from the experimental group. These data were compared for pre to posttest differences.

Findings

Post-data for the control and experimental groups were analyzed using a t-test to ascertain statistically significant differences between the two groups. Data indicate that no significant differences were found between the two groups' attendance. However, the grade point averages and the California Achievement Tests (Reading and Mathematics) between the two groups were statistically significant at the .05 level in favor of the experimental group. The experimental group scored higher on the posttest on three out of five scales of the School Attitude Measure. The control group did not participate in the SAM administration.

Project staff gave favorable ratings to the overall program. They also gave favorable ratings to staff training sessions.

Grade Point Averages

Both experimental and control third grade students showed a decrease in mean grade point averages (GPA's) from June, 1991 to June, 1992. Specifically, experimental students' mean GPA's decreased from 2.83 to 2.72, a difference of -0.11; control student's mean GPA's decreased from 2.73 to 2.51, a difference of -0.22. The post difference between the two groups was statistically significant at the .05 level in favor of the experimental. The product objective for grade point averages was met.

Attendance

Evaluation of attendance data (days absent) for the experimental group showed an increase (decrease of days absent is considered an improvement) and the control group showed a decrease from June, 1991 to June, 1992. The experimental students' mean number of days absent increased from 10.14 to 12.26, a difference of 2.34 days absent; control students' mean

number of days absent decreased from 11.68 to 10.45, a difference of 1.23 days absent. The post difference between the two groups was not statistically significant. The product objective for absenteeism was not met.

California Achievement Tests (CAT)

Both experimental and control students showed an increased grade mean equivalent (GME) as measured by the California Achievement Tests (CAT) for reading from April, 1991 to April, 1992. Specifically, experimental students' GME changed from 3.1 to 4.8 an increase of 1.7; control students GME changed from 2.7 to 3.6 an increase of 0.9. The post difference between the two groups was statistically significant at the .05 level in favor of the experimental group.

Both experimental and control students showed an increased grade mean equivalent (GME) in mathematics from April, 1991 to April, 1992. Specifically, experimental students' GME increased from 3.3 to 4.9 an increase if 1.6; control students' GME increased from 2.7 to 3.7 an increase of 1.0. The post difference between the two groups was statistically significant at the .05 level in favor of the experimental group. The product objective for California Achievement Tests (Reading and Mathematics) was met.

School Attitude Measure (SAM)

Experimental students showed an increase in weighted raw scores (WRS) as measured by the School Attitude Measure in three out of five scales. The control group did not participate in the SAM administration. The product objective for School Attitude Measure (SAM) was not met.

Staff Perceptions

One hundred percent (100%) of the staff members responded positively to ninety-seven percent (97%) of the statements regarding the various aspects of the program for which their opinions were solicited.

One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents responded positively to ninety-seven percent (97%) of the statements regarding the in-service training program. All phases of the in-service training received high ratings. The process objectives of the program were met.

Recommendations

Recommendations based on the findings of this study included:

1. Efforts should be made to continue to offer advanced in-service training for all staff members and, at minimum, a sharing seminar each semester.

2. Efforts should be made to continue to train more teachers per school in order to have a continuation of the program in the 4th and 5th grades.

3. Efforts should be made to continue to offer workshops for parents.

4. Efforts should be made to develop curriculum for grades 1, 2, 4 and 5.

Recommendations based on the evaluator's observations and communication with the staff include:

1. Efforts should be made to insure that target staff (teachers and administrators) are completely aware of the objectives of the program for the upcoming school year.

2. Efforts should be made to continue in-service training for the Elementary Efficacy teachers on how to infuse Efficacy into the curriculum effectively.

3. Efforts should be made to continue to heighten the awareness of total staff of the schools, especially as it relates to the importance of high expectations for student performance, better communication, better relations with peers and adults, and improvement of student self-concept.

4. Efforts should be made to continue to have a one day workshop for school administrators.

5. Efforts should be made by the central administration, school administrators and teacher(s) in each school to review this report's findings and recommendations and develop implementation strategies for the latter.